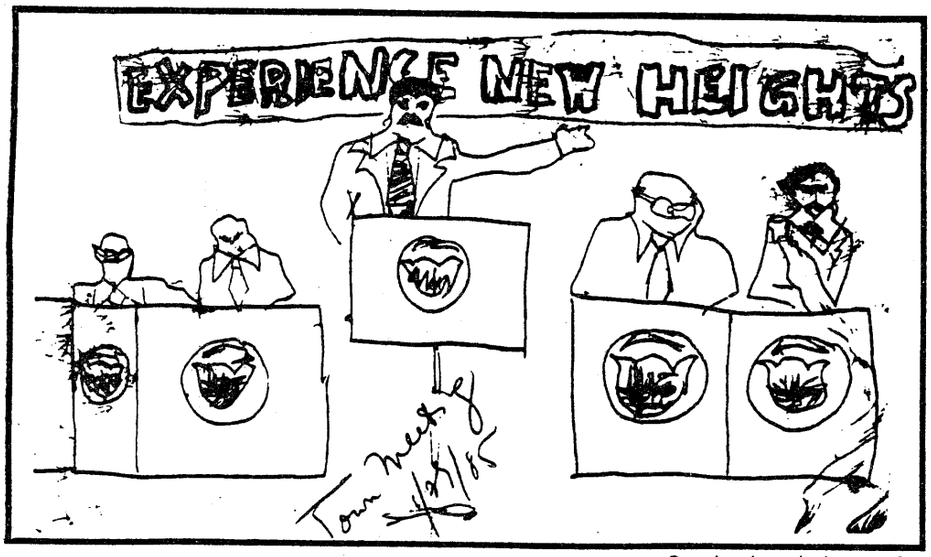
RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

232 Ogden Avenue – Jersey City, N.J. 07307 – (201) 798-0493



Drawing done during meeting by Edith Springer

WARD D COMMUNITY MEETING

By: Edith Springer

Mayor McCann and his "Young Turks" held a minimally publicized "community Meeting" of Ward D at P.S. 8 on January 29th. McCann was the primary speaker, with Mark Munley (Director of Housing and Development); Jack James (Director of Public Works); Joseph Healy (Director of Law Department); Dan Sarpa (Director of Water Department); Richard Harrison (Director of Public Safety); Frederick Tomkins (Director of Adm. and Finance); Thomas Hart (Councilman); John Vicari (Director of J.C. Parking Authority); Norman Guera; Bob Veale (Director of Human Resources) and William Goble (Director of Engineering) sitting on the dais answering questions at McCann's direction. In his initial speech, McCann listed the economic development plans that have begun and are slated for the future. Among them were the Shearson American Express return to J.C., Harbor Site Terminal Projects, office buildings in several different locations, Sears and A&P stores in the Holland Tunnel/Liberty State Park area, waterfront projects, housing developments at Liberty Harbor North, a new aquarium at Liberty State Park, negotiations for a new baseball stadium, Port Liberte, which proposes to build a canal city like Venice, housing units in the Roosevelt Stadium site, expansion and refurbishing of the Hudson Mall, a food distribution center on County Road, and cleanup of the PJP landfill. In addition, Hartz Mountain will be relocating from Secaucus to J.C., offices planned for the "Bowl" property after it has been landfilled, a J.C. radio station (105.9 will be the frequency), proposed new recording studios in the J.C. Armory, plus a film studio. McCann reminded us that the film industry began in J.C., in fact, silent films were shot right here in the Heights.

McCann cited improved real estate values in all of J.C. and noted that during his administration, every homeowner's property has appreciaated at least $30,000. He also noted that deterioration of neighborhoods was less a problem in the Heights than other areas, except for Palisade Ave. Some crime problems were created by people who were displaced from Hoboken due to development and relocated to J.C. The City has concentrated police presence in the "worst areas" of the City and has relocated part of the administration to Palisade Ave. as a presence. The government has encouraged community participation with such events as "Heights Pride Week". In the Heights, there are renovation projects planned for Franklin St. There is less development slated for the Heights compared with other areas of J.C. because the Heights was "not as bad" as other areas, according to the Mayor.

During the question and answer period that followed, many community issues and problems were brought up by members of the RNA and others. In response to a question by Vito Brunetti, McCann stated that no blight studies were being done in the Heights but that blight studies are to improve deteriorating property and that homeowners should not fear that their good houses will be condemned. Bob Lewis asked about the wisdom of giving tax abatements; McCann replied that these are given to office buildings which require fewer city services than do residential buildings. McCann also noted reassessment will result in more equitable taxation throughout the city.

Many specific questions were raised regarding potholes and problems with roads. These were referred to the "Young Turks" who promised to investigate and take action. In regard to the Mountain Rd. issue brought up by Mr. Frank Santoro, a member of the RNA, McCann said that if the community residents would form a consensus on the future of the road, he would follow it. Bob Lewis asked that all interested people attend the next RNA meeting to have a forum on this issue. In regard to poor police response, McCann stated that crime is down in J.C. and that the crime rate is not related to the number of police. He asked people to phone him (at home or in the office) when police do not come promptly, giving the times and facts and he will take action.

RNA WELCOMES "1985"

By: Marie "Dee" Ipsaro

The first "Social Gathering" of the Riverview Neighborhood Association (RNA) was held on Jan. 1, 1985 at the Harbor View Helath Care Center. It was a "Bring a dish and/or drink" affair and the response was great . . . dips, salads, sandwiches, cake, cookies, eggnog, soda and many other goodies. Many new members were welcomed – coming as strangers but leaving as friends. Food, drink and dancing brought everyone together. May this be the first of many socials by the RNA.

Our profuse thanks to Natalie Zanetich, Administrator of the Harbor View Healthcare Center for allowing us the use of this beautiful solarium (with the N.Y. skyline view) plus coffee, etc . . .

Also a big "Thank you" to Mr. "G." of the Palisade Ave. A&P for supplying us with all paper goods (cups, plates, napkins). We deeply appreciate the help and interest you have shown for the RNA since its inception.

OWEN GRUNDY REMEMBERED . . .

By: Theodore Conrad

We're going to miss Owen Grundy, Jersey City's official historian, known for his writings, lectures and associations with historic groups. As a crusader, he loved the excitement of being involved in any civic project, whether it was the fight to keep the tanks out of the Jersey City Waterfront with the Citizens Committee of Hudson County or something as far away as saving the Highlands Lighthouse. He could mostly be found in the New Jersey Room of the main library after 3 p.m., just when everyone also was ready to leave and stay on until the wee hours of the night. All of which made it difficult to get him on the phone, but he insisted he was a night person and was not going to change his lifestyle in any way.

He wrote a short history of Jersey City for the Bi-Centennial, many letters to the Jersey Journal on civic projects and some 50 monographs on Jersey City history. With his bow tie, loose fitting clothes, a pipe which never stayed lit and the mannerisms of the twenties, he looked and acted just like W.C. Flields. He could easily be drawn into a discussion on Jersey City history for hours on end and make the past come alive with his vivid tales. Unfortunately, he never used a tape recorder so that all the stories he could get off the top of his head are now lost. Owen was tops as a public speaker and was much in demand by social organizations, schools and citizen groups. He was one of the last great orators to hold an audience spellbound and was never at a loss for words.

Stormy sessions of the Historic District Commission could get his dander up. They were often better than any show on TV.

Jersey City will never see the likes of an Owen Grundy again. His passing marks the end of a colorful era, from the decline to the rebirth of Jersey City.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This issue of the RNA Newsletter is dedicated to the spirit of Owen Grundy, a Jersey City original.

OUR SINCEREST SYMPATHIES TO CHARLIE REDDEN ON THE PASSING OF HIS FATHER.

OUR PARK GETS A FACE LIFT

By: Raquel Sweeny

Recently, Vito Brunetti, Chairman of the Riverview Neighborhood Association (RNA) Had a telephone conversation with Mrs. June Payne, Chairwoman of the NIP (Neighborhood Improvement Program) regarding the sign posted in Riverview Park on the restoration of the park.

According to Mrs. approximately $56,000 has been allocated to restore the park. The NIP has proposed the following list of improvements in the park:

- Re-cement lower walkway
- Fix retaining wall against the cliff
- Fix roof in the gazebo (inside and out)
- Plant shrubbery and place benches
- Post signs encouraging people to keep our park clean
- Concrete garbage receptacles
- 22-24 Victorian lights (approximately)

The NIP is awaiting the implementation of their plans.

After his conversation with Mrs. Payne, Vito Brunetti has tried to organize a meeting with Tom Hart and Armand Beard to confirm Mrs. Payne's information and also submit the ideas of our Association regarding this project. As of this date, he has been unsuccessful to get Hart and Beard to meet on this issue.

Anne Hart, Karen Lewis, Raquel Sweeny, Ted Conrad and Chuck Hollowell attended a meeting of the RNA Parks Committee on Jan. 16 to discuss this proposal. The Committee agreed with the projects envisioned by the NIP and would also like to include the following:

- Good swings for the kids
- Take care of erosion in the back of the gazebo
- Trimming of trees that obstruct the view
- Special paint for the statue and gazebo that can be cleaned when "necessary"
- Lights inside the gazebo to discourage youngsters from hiding there

It was suggested that our committee contact the block association at the other end of the park and discuss with them the city's proposals. A meeting will be arranged in the near future and anyone who is interested is welcome to attend. The Parks Committee also made the suggestion of forming a "Garden Committee" that would plant flowers in the park and take care of them.

We take this opportunity to inform you that the City is creating the "Friends of the Heights Parks" committees. The purpose of this group is to help keep the Parks in Jersey City clean and beautiful. These meetings are taking place at 316 Palisade Ave. Anyone interested in participating may contact: 547-6817.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTE OFF TO A ROARING START — By: Ed Lortz

The Planning and Development Committee, formed at the December general meeting, had first meeting a week later. In its short existence, it has already dealt with three neighborho development plans which required variances to be built. Due to the alertness of association me bers, it has had enough warning to meet with developers and carefully check their plans for ar thing which would harm the neighborhood.

The first item of business was the variance request by Palisade Gardens Ltd, to build a 4-sto apartment building at 354-358 Palisade, in the process tearing down 179 Ogden. Several me bers of the committee, Edward Lortz, Anne Hart, Vito Brunetti, and Ted Conrad, went befc the Planning Board and supported the controlled development of the neighborhood, but c jected to a new apartment building in the area which included the destruction of an existi house for a driveway. The Planning Board agreed, and gave the developer a month to come with a revision acceptable to the RNA. They did just that, rearranging their driveway and agreei to sell or renovate the house which otherwise would have been torn down. One reason the dev oper was so agreeable was that the committee took into consideration the economic impact of objections. In fact, the committee's suggestion which the developer finally accepted will mc likely result in a greater return on his investment.

A second proposal, this time before the Board of Adjustment which rules on zoning variance concerned 311 Palisade, the triangle across from the A&P. The developer wanted to put up a thr story brick building, with 10 apartments and 15 parking spaces, but he needed a variance to put stores on the first floor. The committee felt that this was indeed a very good use for the proper and supported the request whole-heartedly. The request was granted by the Board.

The last proposal the committee dealt with was the plan to renovate two apartment buildin at the corner of Ogden and Franklin. The committee met with the architect and with the deve oper before the Planning Board meeting, and reached an agreement with them to also resto the facade of the building exactly the way it was except for new windows. The developer, Jorda Industries, also agreed to allow overnight parking for tenants who are also employees of tl Health Center, which Jordan Industries also owns. In lengthy discussion, the committee felt would kill the project if the renovator had to provide complete off the street parking for all unit

The Planning and Development Committee now hopes it may relax for a few days and wishes thank all concerned members who called about new developments in the neighborhood. If yc want to attend these meetings, call Edward Lortz, 795-6183, and leave him or his answering m chine your name and phone number so you can be called when meetings occur. If you get a lett from a developer about a project near you, or hear about some development or renovation beir done, also call him. If Ed doesn't return your call in a day or so, call him back, or call Anne Har 795-2664, or Vito Brunetti, 798-0493. But don't just assume we know. If we are going to act, ever one in the association has to help out. Don't just sit and moan into your beer. GET OUT AND ACT

FLEA MARKET — By: Liz Murray

A neighborhood flea market is always a welcome event for the spring! As our flea market ma be organized in a variety of ways, I suggest setting up an ad hoc committee to run this fund-raiser.

Among the points to be explored are: whether all items are donated to and sold by the RNA whether each participant sells his/her own items and donates an amount to the neighborhoo association; where and when it will be held; publicity, including notices to local newspapers; an drop off dates before the flea market so that items can be priced and recorded.

Now's the time to start segregating unwanted Christmas gifts, unused items, and all those othe weird things around the house.

So let's think about this idea and offer suggestions at the next RNA meeting.

NEED TO RESTORE OR FIX THAT ANTIQUE PORCELAIN? . . .

MARIA ROCHE, who lives on 226 Ogden Ave. is a specialist in the restoration of ceramics (antiques and new), stoneware and porcelains. For the Spring, Maria is preparing an exhibition:

MAINLY CERAMIC

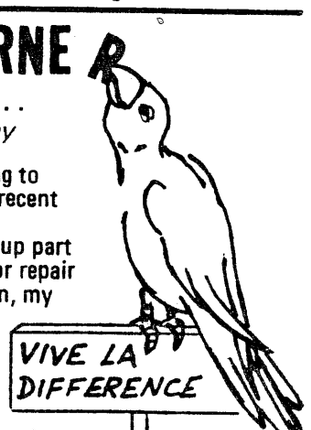
More details about this event will be published in this newsletter.

And, remember, if you have an item around the house that you love, but unfortunately, it's broken, bring it to Maria. Good prices! Her telephone No.: 798-0407.

PETS CORNER

PET ALERT . . .

By: Liz Murray



I offer as a warning to fellow pet owners, a recent experience of mine.

Workmen opened up part of my kitchen wall for repair and unknown to them, my inquisitive cat, Sam, went in to explore. And they sealed up the wall, cat and all. I returned home later in the day and by following the muffled meows, realized where he was and why. The workmen came to Sam's rescue and he emerged safe and sound. A bit smelly perhaps, but safe. And in honor of this ressurection:

There once was a feline named Sam
Who appeared to be on the lam.
But was trapped 'neath the floor
And could stand it no more.
So meowed right out of the jam.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

PUBLIC FORUM — THE FUTURE OF MOUNTAIN ROAD

The closing of Mountain Road has been a source of endless debate in our community, as evidenced most recently at our Town Meeting on January 29th at P. S. 8. Mr. Frank Santoro, opposed to the closing, questioned Mayor McCann and his panel about its reopening. Ms. Anne Hart, supporting the closing, talked about a proposal to renovate the street into a park. Councilman Tom Hart confirmed that the road is to be closed for one year, at which time a decision will be made in regards to its eventual use. Mayor McCann stated that the City is willing to follow the consensus of neighborhood opinion, if one can be reached.

In response to this issue, the RNA has organized a Public Forum on the Future of Mountain Road at our next meeting (Feb. 12). The RNA has invited Councilman Tom Hart, Jack James (Dir./Public Works), Richard Hartford (Dir./Public Safety), and Pat Nelan (Dir./Traffic Engineering) to participate as panelists in this discussion. We urge all interested members to join in this public debate with questions and opinions regarding this street.

Let the City and its officials know that we are concerned citizens and we're able to make our own decisions regarding our neighborhood.

AND REMEMBER
OUR GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, AT 7 P.M.
AT THE
HARBORVIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER
DON'T SIT HOME
WAITING FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN
CONTRIBUTE!!!